

Occupations, Cultures, and Leadership in the Army and Air Force

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Most discussions of culture in the military services concern the relationship between military and civilian culture. Comparatively less interest has been shown in the cultural differences among the military services themselves, although there is considerable informal and anecdotal (often humorous) discussion of such differences within the services. In his 1989 book, *The Masks of War*, Carl Builder focused on “personality” differences among the services, and discussed the implications of those differences for defense policy.¹ C. Kenneth Allard offered an insightful look at service culture in his thorough analysis of the past and future of jointness in our defense establishment.² In the United States, the relatively recent separation of the Air Force from the Army, coupled with the rapid rise of the Air Force as a powerful, independent institution since World War II, offers a unique opportunity to explore the organizational cultures of these two services, and to better understand the implications of culture on leadership styles in each of the services.

Institutional and Occupational Orientations

One important dimension on which organizational cultures may be differentiated is the extent to which they are characterized by an institutional as opposed to an occupational orientation. The institutional orientation is conceptualized as rooted in a calling to serve higher ideals represented by a shared vision of an organization, rather than in individual self-interest. The individual with an occupational orientation, on the other hand, approaches his or her work as a job, to be retained or abandoned based largely (though perhaps not solely) on a calculus of self-interest. Charles Moskos warned

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many years ago that the then-imminent advent of the all-volunteer force brought with it the potential for a shift from an institutional to an occupational model in the military services.³ Nearly 40 years later, many of the institutional features of military service described by Moskos, including such basic features as the compensation structure and paternalistic culture, would seem to be largely intact. Trade unions have made no inroads into the military in America (as they have elsewhere), and reliance on civilian contractors has continued, perhaps grown, with no apparent erosion of the traditional institutional character of the military services. There is, nevertheless, a growing conviction among some that military service is less likely to be conceptualized as a calling today than has been the case in the past, though Andrew Abbott argues that this trend is apparent in all professions.⁴

This discussion of institutional and occupational tendencies within military cultures has struck an especially resonant chord in the Air Force. James Smith, Mike Thirtle, and William Thomas each see occupationalism as contributing to centrifugal forces within the Air Force that potentially threaten cultural identity, individual commitment, unity, and cohesion by fostering identification with specialized occupation-oriented sub-groups, rather than with a shared vision of Air Force identity and values.⁵ This occupational orientation may be a significant factor in differentiating Air Force culture from that of the other services.

Occupations Affect More than Commitment

Another dimension of service culture influenced by occupational orientation was suggested to me recently by a senior staff officer from the military establishment of a European country with whom I was working. He was describing the challenges inherent in joint staff work. An Army officer himself, he observed that senior Air Force officers on joint staffs, who are almost exclusively pilots, seemed to him to manage and absorb information in ways that reflected their occupational training as pilots.

In dealing with complex information from different sources, evaluating and balancing conflicting information, some Air Force officers in staff assignments, he thought, tend to discount inputs not easily and readily assimilated

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into a pre-existing or rapidly developing schema. In the areas of information-gathering, problem-solving, and decisionmaking, some Air Force officers appear to him to behave in the war room as (he believes) they are taught to behave in the cockpit.

While such remarks might easily be ascribed to the prejudices and stereotypes that are an all too common feature of human social interaction, and may represent only one person's view of his idiosyncratic experiences, the idea that the weapons warfighters employ, and the social and cognitive adaptations engendered by the use of those weapons, might influence leadership culture more generally, is intriguing. Information flow in the cockpit is highly sensor- and technology-dependent, highly structured and highly controllable. It is very adaptive for pilots to be very good at shutting out sources of distraction in moments of crisis. The immediate, ultimate, and unquestionable authority of the aircraft commander in the cockpit is a bedrock element of Air Force leadership culture.

The argument that my colleague was making was that professional pilots in staff assignments bring with them some of the same cognitive adaptations that are essential to them in the cockpit, and apply these habits in other leadership situations, where they are arguably less adaptive. While individual differences and variability (irrespective of service) undoubtedly account for more of the variance in performance among officers on a joint staff than those related to service of origin, there may be at least a grain of truth in my colleague's observations, a grain that is worth examining more closely.

Of course, there are not only differences among individuals within a group, but differences among groups in many organizations. Many professions composed of distinct sub-specialties are characterized by a sort of pecking-order: surgeons are the elite in the medical profession, as are troop-leading combat-arms soldiers in the Army. Even within the community of pilots, there are subcultures associated with platform (single-seat and multi-place aircraft) and mission (air combat, transport, training) that may differ substantially from one another. Our point concerns not individuals, nor sub-groups, but the organizational culture itself, however, which individuals and sub-groups may participate in and be bound by to varying degrees. A military service dominated by an occupational culture (or several such cultures) may be affected by that culture in important ways.

It is possible that the particular nature of the occupation in which military members are engaged may directly affect the way they go about the business of leadership, and that the nature of this effect may be different in the different services. This is another, less obvious aspect of service culture. The occupational profile of a service may also affect organizational forms and leadership styles indirectly, if that occupational profile is linked to other indi-

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vidual traits or characteristics, such as social, educational, or cultural variables, that are themselves related to organizational behavior.

Leadership: The Roles of Officers and NCOs

An interesting point was brought home to me many years ago, when I was an Army officer teaching cadets at the US Air Force Academy (USAFA). During some good-natured banter about Army’s (typically abysmal) performance on the gridiron, a cadet remarked that the difference between the Air Force and the Army was that in the Army, the officers send the enlisted soldiers out to fight, while in the Air Force, the enlisted folks stay behind and send the officers out to do the fighting. I heard this expressed in these same words often enough by independent sources to realize that it was part of the cultural equipment of the USAFA Cadet Wing at the time. Mistaken as it was, this half-serious jibe contains some ideas worth unpacking.

The roles of officers, NCOs, and enlisted members, and the relationships among them, do seem to vary across the services. In the ground forces, NCOs are considered the backbone of the service. In the 1970s, General Donn Starry made famous the term “Sergeant’s Business,” and produced a film by that name which all Army officers were required to view annually. The film expressed a fundamental, bedrock element of Army institutional culture: the vital role played by NCOs in the day-to-day running of the Army, and in the training and development of young officers. Whatever the service prejudices of USAFA cadets, the fact is that officers, NCOs, and soldiers do their warfighting together in the Army—they are interdependent in the most profound and literal sense of that term.

In the Air Force, many pilots do go off and do their fighting on their own, or at most with a few other pilots or perhaps crewmembers. Certainly they depend on vital maintenance and logistical support from ground personnel, and certainly the hardships and risks of deployed service are broadly shared, but relationships between officers and enlisted in the Air Force would

seem to be necessarily different from such relationships in the Army and Marine Corps. Crew chiefs simply don't teach pilots how to fly, but NCOs (among others) do teach young lieutenants how to be good leaders in the Army and Marine Corps. While relationships between officers and NCOs in other Air Force career fields may be more parallel to those in the Army, it is pilots who broadly dominate the leadership and mythology of the Air Force. Consequently there may be very different leadership styles among senior officers in the different services, conditioned by their different formative experiences as young officers.

There is an interesting social dimension to this difference, as well. One often hears Army officers and NCOs (even very senior ones) identify themselves as "soldiers," as in saying, "Shoot, I'm just an old soldier." This kind of downward identification, in which virtually everyone in the Army can participate, simultaneously has the effect of publicly endorsing a vision of shared institutional values, and emphasizing the fundamental importance of everyone in the organization as a vital element of that vision.⁶ There is not (and perhaps cannot be) a corresponding statement in the Air Force because, as Thirtle and Thomas each point out, there is not a similarly widespread vision of shared institutional values in the Air Force.⁷ People in the Air Force don't say, "Shoot, I'm just an old airman." Pilots are an elite sub-group, distinguished in myriad ways from other members, and it is mainly pilots that are readily able to participate in a culture rooted in the mythology of aerial combat. Public Air Force rhetoric tries to capture the sense of teamwork that comes naturally in the Army by exhorting members to act like "wingmen" and "airmen," but the reach of these metaphors is naturally limited.

Because Air Force pilots (who are all officers) are technical experts at a task to which non-pilots have nothing to contribute, pilots have very different needs (and perhaps habits) when it comes to seeking out information and advice from others, as compared to ground force officers. For the Army officer, other officers, NCOs, and soldiers are all valuable resources to be respected for the expertise and experience they bring to the officer's warfighting task. Army combat units are far from democracies or college debating societies, but leadership is not usually viewed exclusively as a form of tyranny. The officer is and must be in charge, but the quality of the unit's performance will be determined by how effectively he or she uses the skills, experience, and leadership of his or her subordinates in building and developing the unit. This most fundamental reality of Army leadership engenders a corresponding respect for the importance of human relations in the Army.

In the Air Force, the brotherhood of pilots is necessarily somewhat separated from the experiences of others by virtue of the specialized nature of the task: pilots simply don't need advice from non-pilots on how to fly. The

myth of the solitary and heroic single-combat warrior is important to Air Force culture, and it conditions the understanding of Air Force leaders about the essential nature of leadership. Air Force NCOs are regarded and treated as the superb professionals they are, but they do not (and cannot) participate in the dominant warfighting myth in the same way that Army or Marine Corps NCOs do; their expertise, concerns, and activities overlap only partly with those of pilots and officers.

The commercial value of an aeronautical rating in the civilian world also differentiates Air Force officers from their counterparts in the ground services. Learning to fly immediately creates the potential for a career working as a commercial airline pilot, an attractive and sometimes lucrative profession. While it is difficult to discuss this fact without sounding as if it is being suggested that Air Force officers are somehow less patriotic, less loyal, or more mercenary than Army or Navy officers (this is most certainly *not* what is being suggested), it cannot be denied that the occupational and institutional dimensions of service culture are simply different across the three services. In this sense, there is at least the potential for pilots to view the Air Force as one of several venues that may make it possible for them to continue in the occupation of flying, while no comparable calculus can exist for infantrymen, tankers, or submariners. Moreover, the expense and importance of aviation and the aviation-related industry to our economy connect the Air Force to powerful economic and political forces in society far more directly than is the case for the other services.

Cognition and Culture

There is a psychological concept called “cognitive dissonance” which is perhaps relevant when we consider the development of institutional culture in military settings. Leon Festinger, a social psychologist, asked people to perform a boring and unpleasant task (place a spool on each of 48 wooden pegs in a board, rotate the spool a quarter turn, remove the spool, and then replace it). After they had finished, he then asked them to tell others about to perform the task that it was enjoyable and exciting. He paid half the people a small amount of money to tell the fib, and the other half a much larger amount. When he then asked the people who had performed this boring task to rate it using a questionnaire, he found that those who had been paid the lower amount of money rated it much more favorably than those who had been paid a large amount of money to fib about the task.⁸ The explanation is that humans act to reduce any disconnect between thought and deed. If we are paid a lot to fib, then we understand what happened and have no need to change our attitude to make sense of our behavior: we did it for the money. But if we are paid only a trivial amount, then a dissonance between our atti-

“The fact is that officers, NCOs, and soldiers do their warfighting together in the Army.”

tudes and behavior is apparent. Why lie for a pittance? The behavior is a fact, so the only way to reduce the dissonance is to make our attitudes more consistent with the behavior.

It may be that the Army and Navy have an easier time creating an institutional culture based on superordinate values and beliefs because most Army and Navy officers do not have an extrinsic motivator to potentially explain their commitment to military service. Military service as a calling that transcends self-interest is an especially compelling explanation when behavior and self-interest may appear quite dissonant, as they may for Army or Navy service members. Military service entails sacrifice: why do we make those sacrifices? If incentives are offered to serve, either in the form of the opportunity to enter and continue a passionately loved occupation, or as bonuses and flight pay, the transcendent component of motivation to serve may be less necessary as a way of understanding and explaining one’s behavior. Moreover, many Air Force members will tell you that they generally sacrifice much less in terms of creature comforts and other associated costs of military service than do “grunts.” In fact, many will tell you that is why they chose the Air Force. The Air Force currently justifies its use of 120-day deployments (the Marines use nine-month rotations, the Army one year) on the basis of its view of itself as the “retention” service: because its members are highly trained in technical specialties, the Air Force uses a shorter, more expensive deployment cycle to avoid driving them out of the service. But less sacrifice also means less dissonance to explain, and perhaps further impediments to the establishment of an overarching institutional orientation.

Service “Personalities”

Just as Army and Air Force cultures seem to differ with respect to the internal relationships between officers and others, the two services also have cultivated different global images of the services themselves, determined in part by the origin and roles of the services. The Army, the Navy, and the Marine Corps antedate the republic itself—the traditional services have co-evolved with the country for, quite literally, centuries. The Air Force owes its comparatively recent independent existence not to the progressive, open-minded and

welcoming spirit of the older services, but to the brute intervention of the civilian government.

Air Force leaders are constantly struggling to symbolically sustain and justify the independent service identity of the Air Force and to create and protect a unique Air Force culture comparable to those of the other services. This mainly manifests itself in the focus on technology in the Air Force, which is seen as setting the Air Force above the less-technological traditional services. There is an absolutist and anti-intellectual strain in Air Force culture (as many have observed in military culture more generally) that resonates with a view of the world as simple and clear. Confidence in the intellectual superiority of the Air Force over the other services coexists with what sometimes appears to be contempt for the rough-and-tumble of open intellectual discourse. The paradox of Air Force culture is that it can be decidedly anti-intellectual—a circumstance perhaps not uncommon in authoritarian cultures such as the military—but nevertheless convinced of its intellectual superiority. This tendency is perhaps stronger in the Air Force than in the other services.

These aspects of global Air Force culture also affect organizational forms and penetrate the thinking of the rank and file, implicitly modeling a more hierarchical, executive, personal model of decisionmaking that shapes the culture of leadership in the Air Force. The responsibility of the Air Force for controlling a component of the American strategic nuclear deterrent may also have led to broad institutional reliance on organizational models characterized by concentration and elevation of decisionmaking power in highly centralized structures.

Controversy over the centralization of command authority and tactical decisionmaking in the Army has been a prominent feature of post-World War II discussions of Army culture. David Hackworth's colorful and interesting account of his experiences as an Army officer in the decades after World War II chronicle the struggles of the Army to adapt to the political, technological, and social upheaval of the postwar era.⁹ More recently, Donald Vandergriff, and also Don Snider and Gayle Watkins, have offered systematic analyses of the challenges confronting Army culture.¹⁰ Perhaps because the Army has existed long enough to have been repeatedly, and sometimes brutally, forced to reexamine its role in national defense, self-reflection and analysis are vital components of Army culture. General Peter Schoomaker, Army Chief of Staff, said recently, "We must be prepared to question everything" in endorsing innovation and culture change in the Army.¹¹

More Technical, Less Dominative?

Morris Janowitz argued 45 years ago that as the military services became more technical, organizational patterns would shift in the direction of

more “manipulative” (or managerial) and less “dominative” (or authoritarian) relationships.¹² Bengt Abrahamsson extended this hypothesis a decade later by arguing that this tendency would be greater in the Air Force than in the Army, based on the fundamentally technological orientation of the Air Force.¹³ Many seem to intuitively accept the truth of this proposition, embracing a perception of the Air Force as a kinder, gentler kind of military organization. The reality, however, may be more complicated than Abrahamsson thought. Perhaps the superficial gentility of the Air Force masks an underlying leadership culture that is as fundamentally authoritarian as that of the ground forces, or even more so. Perhaps the superficial gruffness of the ground forces exists in a culture which embraces human interaction in a more sophisticated way than meets the eye. While there has been some effort to study authoritarian attitudes in military settings, relatively little effort has been devoted to directly comparing the services themselves, so these perceptions must remain largely untested.¹⁴

Given that the cultural identity of the Air Force includes a vision of the Air Force as the progressive and modern service, it is perhaps paradoxical, then, that in some ways the Air Force appears to be far more insular and conservative than the older services. Officer development and education at the service academies offer an illustrative comparison. As West Point has changed its curriculum to prepare officers to cope with the manifold challenges of military service in the 21st century by better balancing technical and nontechnical subjects, the Air Force Academy has recently shifted the balance among its academic programs in favor of science and technology. As the Army has responded to the global challenges of the new century with greater openness and flexibility (at least educationally), the Air Force has narrowed its focus still more tightly on technology.¹⁵

More Technical, More Dominative?

The hypothesis that more technical military cultures (such as that of the Air Force) are likely to be less authoritarian may simply be wrong. In certain circumstances, highly technical occupations may generate a heightened risk for the development of insular and autocratic cultures, if steps are not taken to prevent the development of such cultures. In highly exclusive technical organizations, the sophisticated nature of the daily work limits opportunities for participation by people who do not share the required education or expertise, and often the experience and worldview, of technical experts. In the military, this isolation is exacerbated by the tight control over entry to elite circles and access to power that is possible for members of the expert group. Because accountability in such systems is weak, there may be systematic biases in selection for positions of authority that are difficult to assess or

control.¹⁶ Both by selection of like-minded people and by suppression of dissent through coercive application of authority, views and opinions contrary to those of the power elites are easily discounted.

Even outside the military, the nature of technical work itself can lead to habits of thought that may militate against the kind of agonizing and searching consideration of difficult and complex issues that is so vital in today's operational environment. Engineering, medicine, and intelligence work are examples of areas where some or all of these factors are especially dominant. Engineers recognize that due to the nature of their work, extraordinary measures may need to be taken to ensure that they continue to think in creative ways. NASA's tragic failures in the shuttle program have been attributed largely to management structures unable to adequately process unwelcome ideas and criticisms from employees, rather than technical mistakes. The incredible achievements of our industrial laboratories and manufacturing plants remind us, however, that whatever the potentially stultifying effects of technical work might be, they can be spectacularly overcome.

While nonmilitary organizations dominated by technical occupations may be somewhat prone to exclusivity and insularity, it is the case that the combination of modern bureaucracy and human psychological and social characteristics can produce such outcomes in all walks of life. An excellent example of the hazards of insular and exclusive organizational cultures in a nontechnical occupation is the release by CBS News of apparently forged letters about President Bush's National Guard service during the Vietnam War in the last presidential campaign. In this instance journalism, an occupation founded on the basis of objectivity, was shown to be vulnerable to these same hazards of elitism and exclusivity. It happens that in the case of CBS, the exclusivity was rooted in political, not technical, qualifications. While technical organizations may be especially susceptible to the development of exclusive organizational climates, any organization (including liberal arts colleges) can easily fall prey to the same problems. Groupthink occurs in all kinds of groups: it just occurs more readily in some groups than in others.

Social and Cultural Issues

There may also be linkages between occupational preferences and other individual characteristics relevant to leadership and service culture. Morris Rosenberg's classic study of occupations and values offered intriguing glimpses of the apparently complex web of correlations among occupational preferences, values, and attitudes.¹⁷ Abrahamsson noted, as many have, the similarities between military and religious or monastic organizational structures.¹⁸ While Rosenberg did not study the relationship between occupational choices and religiosity, it may be the case that certain occupational cat-

“Public Air Force rhetoric tries to capture the sense of teamwork that comes naturally in the Army.”

Categories are more or less likely to attract people with strong religious views than others. If this is so, and if organizations are dominated by people in one or a few occupational categories, then the potential for differentiation from society on related variables (such as religiosity) exists.

It appears that such differentiation may be occurring in parts of our military establishment. For example, pervasive cultural issues involving perceived religious intolerance among some of the leadership, staff, faculty, and cadets recently reported at the Air Force Academy may indicate that just such a differentiation has occurred at that institution. The Air Force Academy is located in Colorado Springs, home to several large evangelical churches, and the area is a popular assignment and retirement destination for many service members. The problems uncovered at the Air Force Academy¹⁹ may be indicative of nothing more than a local cultural issue, but these problems may also suggest a more widespread and deeper trend: perhaps the demographic changes in our military over the past decades have contributed to subtle changes in the proportion or distribution of people with particular religious beliefs in the services more broadly.

John Brinsfield reports that Army soldiers self-identify as members of specific religious traditions at about the same rate (64 percent) as members of society at large (63 percent).²⁰ It is not known, however, exactly how the military differs from society as a whole in the proportion or distribution of particular religious sub-groups. David Segal and Mady Wechsler Segal report that approximately four times as many military members (11 percent) identify themselves as “other Christian” than do members of the general population, (three percent) while correspondingly fewer self-identify as Protestant, Roman Catholic, or Orthodox.²¹ Because of inconsistencies and difficulties in collecting data on religious beliefs, it is difficult to know what to make of these differences. It is clear that on certain issues with a religious dimension, such as tolerance of differences in sexual orientation, the views of some military members diverge from those of the population as a whole.²² Are there differences in the religious views of service members and civilians, of officers and enlisted, in higher- and lower-ranking officers, in members of the different services, of

different occupational groups or organizations within the services? If such differences exist, do they matter?

These questions may be important to consider in the future. Military members identify themselves as Republicans with considerably greater frequency than do Americans as a whole.²³ While it has been argued that the political identification of military members has not really changed much over the last several decades,²⁴ the last two election cycles have raised fears that the body politic may be becoming more polarized. If so, then the demographic asymmetry between the military and society will amplify political differences between the military and at least a sizable portion of civil society. A military self-image as an island of traditional American moral and religious values in a sea of post-modern relativism²⁵ is fraught with the potential to exacerbate, rather than mitigate, strains in civil-military relations. This particular aspect of civil-military relations is ripe for further research.

Army Culture and Fourth-Generation Warfare

Thomas Hammes argues that the dominant form of warfare over the last half-century has been so-called fourth-generation warfare.²⁶ This form of warfare, an evolved form of insurgency, “does not attempt to win by defeating the enemy’s military forces. Instead, via diverse networks, fourth-generation warfare directly attacks the minds of enemy decision makers to destroy the enemy’s political will.”²⁷

This may not be the way we want to fight, but it may be the way we have to fight, because our enemies perceive that it is the only form of warfare in which we can be confronted with some prospect of success. If this is so, then what is needed in our defense establishment is not transformation into a better, more technological, conventional (third-generation warfare) force, but transformation into a force with a very different mix of capabilities. We are only beginning to understand what the nature and extent of the changes required as part of that transformation may be, but they will be tectonic in their far-reaching effects on the status quo.

The Army will face monumental challenges to its combat-arms culture, rooted (as Carl Builder suggests) in the spectacularly successful march across Europe in 1944-1945, as it confronts the prospect of the nonlinear battlefield fundamentally changing the dominant image of warfighting that has served so long and so well. Concerns about the cultural effects of focusing on roles other than full-scale conventional combat foreshadow the strains that will challenge unity and cohesion in the Army.²⁸

John Gordon and Jerry Sollinger suggest that Army culture needs to change by embracing a shift to a role as the “supporting service.”²⁹ This shift, they believe, is conditioned by the growing reliance of national power elites

on air power as a first response in crises, and on the centrality of air power to early military successes in Iraq and elsewhere. But Hammes points out that our enemies, closely watching the unfolding events in Iraq, will be less and less likely to engage us on terms that allow us to apply such power in the future, and more likely to engage us on terms favorable to them.³⁰ Air power was decisive in achieving the military objectives set early in the Iraq campaign, but the political objectives of our involvement in Iraq still seem a long way from being met as of autumn 2005.

Gordon and Sollinger offer no suggestions for changes in Air Force culture, but it would seem that the key role of Air Force and Navy aviation, exemplified to them by three incidents from the early stages of the Iraq war, has been less apparent as the war has continued, and may remain so as the war seems poised to continue for perhaps several more years.³¹ It is the Air Force that has settled into a role as the supporting service, and will probably continue in that role in Iraq indefinitely. Under these circumstances, perhaps Air Force culture is also in need of reconsideration of its “Cold War mindset,” as Gordon and Sollinger recommend for the Army.

Conclusions

It would seem that the shift to the all-volunteer force did not immediately lead to wholesale disruptions in the institutional culture of the services, nor to an obvious rise in occupational attitudes. Thirty years on, however, new pressures appear to be building that again suggest we should turn our attention to service culture and proactively manage the consequences of looming changes in our defense establishment and posture.

What are these pressures? Growing reliance on bonuses and reenlistment incentives may affect the occupational orientation of service members. While noble ideals and self-interest probably coexist in the motivational structures of all service members, the proportions may be undergoing differential change in different groups. The Army’s “Blue to Green” initiative, which hopes to attract Air Force and Navy personnel affected by downsizing in their home services to transfer to the Army, brings into sharp focus these motivational dimensions of service culture.

These issues can become only more important in the future. As the strains on our Guard and Reserve forces continue to grow, more creative ways to make military service more attractive will be sought. For example, General James Helmly, Chief of the Army Reserve, recently warned of the potentially negative effects of paying reservists an extra \$1,000 per month to accept a second mobilization assignment.³² The Army appears poised to rely more and more heavily on financial and other incentives to attract recruits. Adaptation to these changes will challenge the Army’s institutional culture.

By far the greatest pressure will come from the need to adapt existing service cultures to the realities of fourth-generation warfare. Defining the “heart and soul” of institutions is a continual process of preserving traditional conceptions while at the same time updating, refining, and sometimes replacing them as conditions change.³³ Organizations with long, storied histories and strong traditions are perhaps best equipped to withstand these periodic redefinitions. A certain comfort and security comes with the knowledge that an organization has survived great upheaval before.

The Army is already questioning everything, and is confronting the challenge of cultural change head-on. Within the Air Force, the broadly accepted institutional culture that is characteristic of the other services has arguably not yet developed, and, as a result, the Air Force may face greater institutional challenges in these times of turbulence and uncertainty. Accustomed to seeing itself as the preeminent, modern branch of the service overtaking the roles of the traditional services, the Air Force has not had to develop the kind of self-reflective and self-critical leadership culture that “questions everything.”

Both the Air Force and the Army face an uncomfortable future in which existing capabilities and associated cultures may require significant retooling. The Army has adapted to such changes before, and has successfully retained (or recovered) its traditional institutional culture. European military establishments, though rooted in fundamentally different cultures, already have had to adapt to many of the same pressures we now face. The Air Force has not yet had to renew itself in the far-reaching ways events now seem to demand. We may not yet be able to see the contours of the successful adaptations that lie ahead for the two services, but we can be sure that they will ultimately be rooted not only in technological wizardry, but also in a better understanding of the human and cultural dimensions of service and sacrifice in an age that promises to demand a great deal more of both.

NOTES

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6. The Army is far from a monolithic organization, however, and it contains its own subcultures, some associated with particular military branches (such as infantry or artillery), others with a more occupational focus (physicians, lawyers).

7. Thirtle; Thomas.

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11. David A. Fastabend and Robert H. Simpson, "The Imperative for a Culture of Innovation in the U.S. Army: Adapt or Die," *Army Magazine*, February 2004, pp. 15-21.

12. Morris Janowitz, *The Professional Soldier* (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1960).

13. Bengt Abrahamsson, *Military Professionalization and Political Power* (Beverly Hills, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1972).

14. D. T. Campbell and Thelma K. McCormack, "Military Experience and Attitudes Toward Authority," *The American Journal of Sociology*, 62 (March 1957), 482-90; see also Elizabeth G. French and R. R. Ernest, "The Relation between Authoritarianism and Acceptance of Military Ideology," *Journal of Personality*, 24 (February 1956), 181-92.

15. An example of this difference in approach is the smaller and more flexible "core" curriculum at West Point composed of 26 courses, with different requirements for cadets with different majors, as compared to a "core for all" of 32 courses at USAFA. (USMA Curriculum and Course descriptions, <http://www.dean.usma.edu/sebpublic/curriecat/static/index.htm>; USAFA Curriculum handbook, 2004-2005, pp. 70-71.) At West Point, all cadets are required to take two semesters of a foreign language; at USAFA, a similar requirement was recently changed to eliminate this requirement for technical majors, while requiring four semesters of a language for non-technical majors, as a way of increasing the number of cadets enrolling in technical majors.

16. Mady Wechsler Segal and Chris Bourg, "Professional Leadership and Diversity in the Army," in Snider and Watkins.

17. Morris Rosenberg, *Occupations and Values* (Glencoe, Ill.: The Free Press, 1957).

18. Abrahamsson.

19. The incidents at the Air Force Academy include allegations that some non-Christians have experienced disrespect and discrimination at the hands of Christian cadets and staff members. See stories in the Colorado Springs *Gazette*: "AFA Faces Faith Bias Allegations" (18 November 2004); "AFA and Religion Topic of TV Show" (18 February 2005); "AFA Coach Says Religion is Paramount at School" (26 February 2005); "AFA Says it's Fighting Bias Issue Head-On" (6 March 2005), available at <http://afa.gazette.com>.

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22. David Segal and Meyer Kestnbaum, "Professional Closure in the Military Labor Market: A Critique of Pure Cohesion," in Snider and Watkins.

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30. Hammes.

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33. Thirtle.